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21 October 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: Overhead Reconnaissance of Cuba

1. In addition to whatever bald facts are presented to you on the above subject based on actual flight scheduling, minutes of Special Group meetings, COMOR reports, etc., I think you should know of the atmosphere that pervaded the discussion of these matters in Special Group and in the Community at large. Throughout the month of July the routine of two flights per month was covered. By early August when the increase in Soviet shipping appeared significant, there were some pressures for increased reconnaissance but the take at that time really showed nothing significant. The mission on 29 August (read out on 1 September) first showed surface-to-air missile sites. Unfortunately, on Thursday, 29 August, the SAC U-2 violated the Soviet border at Sakhalin. On Friday, 30 August, after a telephone call from you, I mentioned to the Special Group the need for additional flights over Cuba and at this time brought up the matter of 101's in low-level reconnaissance. This was done orally and was not discussed on its merits by the Group.

2. Even more unfortunately, on Saturday, 8 September, the

[redacted]. On 10 September I addressed a formal recommendation to the Secretary of Defense that he study the feasibility of 101 or similar low-level reconnaissance over Cuba. It was suggested that this matter be presented to the Special Group. It was subsequently (14 September) noted by the Special Group that the Secretary of Defense did not wish the operation considered until the results of U-2 reconnaissance became available.

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4. The record itself will not show clearly that there was an urgent demand for more U-2 flights during the period up to the point of first locating the MRBM missile sites. The record will show all requests for U-2 flights by the Special Group were approved by higher authority. The record will not show, nor can it be fully appreciated without being present during the discussions, the great concern of some members of the Special Group that another U-2 incident might occur. [redacted]

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5. As a matter of fact, it was not until the evening of Monday, 15 October, that the first MRBM signature was identified. As I recall, but have not verified, we had considerable difficulty throughout this period with weather.

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(File)
6 November 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: Air Surveillance of Cuba

1. A separate memorandum on the air defenses of Cuba is being worked up for you by DD/R along the lines of your draft memorandum of this morning. As an intelligence presentation, I am sure it will be perfectly adequate for your needs. The following additional suggestions are not in the intelligence collection or evaluation field but may be pertinent to your discussions in the Executive Committee meetings.

2. The record is abundantly clear that the United States has publicly stated several times its intent to continue air surveillance of Cuba.

a. This is certainly implied in paragraph 2 of the OAS Resolution (see Tab A).

b. On November 1st Mr. McCloy asked Mikoyan for assurances that U. S. planes would not be fired on since this was the only form of inspection and verification presently available. Mikoyan said they could not guarantee that the guns would not shoot because Cuba was an independent country over which USSR had no control.

c. On 2 November the President issued a public statement which said, in pertinent part:

"...The United States intends to follow closely the completion of this work through a variety of means, including aerial surveillance, until such time as an equally satisfactory international means of verification is effected..."

"The continuation of these measures in the air and sea until the threat to peace posed by these offensive weapons is

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gone is in keeping with our pledge to secure their withdrawal or elimination from this hemisphere...."

3. I do not see how the United States can possibly withdraw from or in any way ameliorate its clear-cut position. To do so would not only deprive us of our only reliable form of intelligence but, perhaps even more important, would degrade the position of the President and the posture of this country in the eyes of the world. We can prove incontrovertibly that the surface-to-air missile system (the only system effective against the U-2) is Soviet-manned, Soviet controlled, and Soviet commanded. Any hostile act from this system against our U-2's is therefore a Soviet protection of Cuban interests rather than a Cuban protection of Cuban international borders. This would be an even more provocative act than if the Cubans did it themselves.

4. If the opportunity arises, I urge that you, as a policy adviser to the President, recommend most strongly that we continue our surveillance on a regular schedule, even more intensive than we might reasonably need, in order to establish and to maintain our clear-cut and unequivocal intent to maintain constant surveillance of Cuba. I further urge that in the event there is a shoot-down by surface-to-air missiles or if there is an attack and shoot-down by MIG's, we immediately, by tactical air bombardment, render inoperative every one of the twenty-four SAM sites and all of the MIG interceptor aircraft.

5. Having once established our position that we will continue surveillance, the most disastrous thing we could do in the present situation is to back down in the face of a hostile interception.

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Extract from the OAS Resolution

"2. To recommend that the member states, in accordance with Articles 6 and 8 of the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance, take all measures, individually and collectively including the use of armed force, which they may deem necessary to ensure that the Government of Cuba cannot continue to receive from the Sino-Soviet powers military material and related supplies which may threaten the peace and security of the continent and to prevent the missiles in Cuba with offensive capability from ever becoming an active threat to the peace and security of the continent;"